

NEWS FROM ANGLIA

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CHIMERA

A ZENITH PRODUCTION FOR
ANGLIA FILMS



CHIMERA



A maniac is on the loose in the wilds of North Yorkshire after a massacre at a top secret research clinic in CHIMERA, a four part thriller from Anglia starting on ITV on Sunday July 7th at 9.05pm.

John Lynch, Kenneth Cranham and Christine Kavanagh star in this terrifying tale about the chilling world of genetic engineering.

The Jenner Clinic is destroyed in an explosion, and the entire staff wiped out by someone - or something - of superhuman strength.

Journalist Peter Carson investigates the tragedy which he fears has claimed the life of his girlfriend, nurse Tracy Pickford. He is drawn into a nightmare of secrecy, violence and hostility as the Government seeks to hide the truth about the clinic's work.

The only survivor of the massacre, research scientist Alison Wells, agrees to help Carson as he seeks to unravel the horrible secrets.

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Jenner had created the scientifically impossible: a chimera—a man-ape hybrid with the strength of a fully grown primate, and the mind of a small child. But for ten years his creature, Chad, has been locked away, kept alive for research only.

But as Carson and Alison pursue their investigation, they find the armed forces are hot on their trail. Sinister Government agents, led by Hennessey, are determined that nothing and nobody will stand in the way of scientific progress.

John Lynch, best known for his leading role in Cal with Helen Mirren, is Carson, Kenneth Cranham, star of Shine on Harvey Moon and BAFTA award winning Oranges Are Not The Only Fruit, is Hennessey and Christine Kavanagh is Alison Wells.

CHIMERA was adapted into the four hour television serial by best selling writer Stephen Gallagher from his first novel. The publication of CHIMERA in 1982 instantly established Stephen Gallagher as one of Britain's leading authors of contemporary thriller fiction.

Widely acclaimed as a genre horror writer, Gallagher received mainstream recognition with the publication of his book Rain. Three of his other novels are destined for the screen, Valley of Lights, Oktober and Down River. His latest book, The Boat House, was published earlier this year.

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CHIMERA was produced by Nick Gillott and directed by Lawrence Gordon Clark.

"Chimera is a controversial story about the sort of genetic engineering and scientific research which may be going on in secret, and about how such developments may be covered up by the Government to avoid a public scandal, " says Nick.

"We aim to convey the fear that is aroused when an ordinary man or woman tries to find out what is really going on behind the facade, and meets the forces of darkness.

"The story takes a nurse out of the squalor of London and the National Health Service into the green and pleasant land of North Yorkshire and a private clinic. But our film reveals there are even worse horrors than those we have touched upon in the scenes of deprivation in London."

Nick Gillott produced The Attic-The Hiding Place of Anne Frank for Yorkshire Television, and The Return of Sherlock Holmes. He had been producing American mini series before working on CHIMERA.

Lawrence Gordon Clark has directed Frederick Forsyth Presents, The Paradise Club, Harry's Game, Romance on the Orient Express and Jamaica Inn.

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Primate expert Peter Elliott, who played lead apes in Greystoke, Gorillas in the Mist and King Kong, was the advisor for the programme, providing expert advice on how the hybrid creature should behave.



Chad was created by animatronics company Image Animation, which specialises in creating monsters for horror movies such as Hellraiser and Night Breed. This is the first time they had used their highly sophisticated techniques to create a creature for television. Actor Douggie Mann had the task of making the monster come alive.

CHIMERA was filmed on locations in London and North and West Yorkshire.

A paperback book has been published by Hodder and Stoughton.

A ZENITH PRODUCTION

FOR ANGLIA FILMS

FOR TX ON ITV

ON SUNDAY JULY 7TH 1991 AT 9.05PM

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JOHN LYNCH PLAYS PETER CARSON



The role of crusading journalist Peter Carson in Chimera made actor John Lynch acutely aware of the far reaching effects of genetic engineering.

"The whole area of research into genetic engineering should be carefully monitored," says 29 year old John.

"Nature is so finely tuned, and the effects of what we are doing have not been realised. Throughout history there have been cover-ups, and CHIMERA shows that."

John's character in CHIMERA is devastated to find his girlfriend, nurse Tracy Pickford, is one of the victims of a bloody massacre at a top secret research clinic in the wilds of North Yorkshire.

He is determined to discover how she died and the truth about the work of the Jenner Clinic which has been masquerading as an infertility treatment centre.

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"There are some highly emotionally charged scenes about issues which are now very topical," says John.

"I found it a challenge to play a character who is so visible and upfront. The issue of genetic engineering, which the story revolves around, is so relevant.

"The creatures being created are subjected to abuse by arrogant humans, whose theory is that it helps mankind. Man always has to tinker and fiddle.

"The stories that are around about such developments, and the things that can be done in theory are frightening, and not far away from what CHIMERA is dealing with."

Born in Coventry, but brought up in Northern Ireland, John's acting ambitions began when he was still at school. And when he was just 19 he joined the Central School of Speech and Drama in London.

He was still in his second year when David Puttnam picked John for the leading role for which he is best known - in the film Cal with Helen Mirren. After the film which won much critical acclaim, John returned to drama school to complete his course.

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He launched his stage career with a season at the Contact Theatre in Manchester. A string of roles followed, including Konstantin in *The Seagull* at the Lyric Theatre in London's Hammersmith, and Smike in *Nicholas Nickleby* for the Royal Shakespeare Company.



John played major roles in two feature films released last year - *Hardware* and *1871*. In *Hardware*, John plays a junkie travelling the wastelands of future America. And in Ken McMullen's *1871* he is an Irish freedom fighter.

Light relief from these two intense films came as John starred as a top footballer in the BBC comedy drama, *Making Out* - a particular pleasure for John who is a keen Manchester United supporter.

After *CHIMERA* John worked on the ITV series *Shrinks*, and the BBC comedy *All Good Things* with Warren Clarke and Brenda Blethyn. He has recently finished shooting a film in Ireland, *The Railway Station Man*, with Julie Christie and Donald Sutherland.

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CHRISTINE KAVANAGH PLAYS ALISON WELLS



A trip to the zoo and a crash course in sign language was demanded before Christine Kavanagh began filming CHIMERA.

As research scientist Alison Wells, Christine had to communicate with the hybrid creature Chad, and with the chimps at the Jenner Clinic.

So she paid a visit to Twycross Zoo in Leicestershire, famous for its chimps tea parties to meet her two co-stars, three year old Flynn and two year old Josie.

"The trip to Twycross was my favourite day of the shoot," says Christine.

"As I sat waiting to meet the chimps I have to admit I was a little apprehensive. I am not frightened of animals. But I was told that first impressions were very important, and that I should not appear nervous or flinch. I was told to treat them as you would toddlers.

"Flynn was very amenable and sweet. He was used to being handled. But Josie was more reluctant."

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Molly Badham, who runs Twycross told Christine that Flynn would recognise his new friend the next time they met.

"A week later we were shooting a scene where I had to call out to Flynn. He recognised me immediately, and jumped straight into my arms. So we were able to do the scene in one take," says Christine.



Christine was taught sign language, a mixture of deaf and dumb language and Anslang, used to communicate with animals by primates consultant Peter Elliott who has worked on films such as Gorillas in the Mist, Greystoke and King Kong.

Born in Liverpool 34 year old Christine trained to be a drama teacher when she left school. But she decided acting was to be her career and began training at the Bristol Old Vic.

She joined Alan Ayckbourn's company and played a wide variety of roles in repertory theatre before joining the Royal Shakespeare Company at Stratford.

A role in the ITV series The Bretts launched her television career, and a string of roles followed in A Very British Coup, a Ruth Rendell Christmas special- No Crying He Makes, Lovejoy, Minder, Inspector Morse and All Creatures Great and Small.

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"I do seem to play a lot of aristocratic, aloof English roses, the upper crust types. In the theatre I had a run of playing aloof, bitchy women," says Christine.

"I was in my seventh heaven playing a Cathy Come Home type of character in the Ruth Rendell story with my hair dyed black and no make up- a mother of two who had been beaten up by her husband.



"And CHIMERA provided another break away from the English rose image. Alison Wells is a real person, not a drippy token sex interest. It's great to play a woman knowing you are not required for how attractive you are. Alison Wells was a breath of fresh air. She is a flawed character who has a dilemma about the consequences of her work and the fate of Chad."

Christine is keen to change her image with a completely new look. "I want to have my hair cropped in an Annie Lennox style, no more pretty blonde bob. I want to shake off the cool and collected image and get my hands dirty, do something where I can use emotional anger."

Christine is married to actor Jack Ellis, who starred in Clockwork Orange. They live in North London.

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KENNETH CRANHAM PLAYS HENNESSEY

Kenneth Cranham has rather cornered the market in playing wicked characters lately.

After four highly popular series as chirpy cockney hero Harvey Moon in Shine on Harvey Moon he became a bit of a Mr Nasty.

The Brylcream and braces image was dramatically replaced with a fearsome character he played in the horror movie Hellraiser 11, requiring seven hours of make-up to achieve a terrifying visage.

He went on to play a hard drinking, aggressive company director in A Sort of Innocence, a one armed crook in EL CID, a tour guide with a guilty secret in Inspector Morse, and an evangelical minister in the award winning Oranges Are Not The Only Fruit.

And in CHIMERA he plays a sinister Government agent with a wicked plot to breed chimeras to carry out menial tasks.

"I suppose I have played more than my share of nasty types, but I am getting used to it," says Ken.

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"At least as Hennessey I didn't have to get my hands dirty. Hennessey is rather sinister, but he does have a certain boyish charm. And it was great to play someone who has a chauffeur. I am not too clever at the old driving."

Ken certainly does get his hands dirty in the feature film he has just finished making- Prime Suspect (not the television drama) starring Liam Neeson. He is required to race across rooftops, crash cars and prevent executions in this murder mystery thriller.

The film re-united Ken with actor Lee Whitlock who played his son Stanley in Shine On Harvey Moon. "It is the first time Lee and I have worked together since Harvey Moon. But we have always kept in touch, as I have with Linda Robson, who played my daughter.

"I was very disappointed to miss her wedding. I was away on location. Even though I was only her screen dad, it was hurtful not to be there on her big day," Ken admits.

Ken describes CHIMERA as a "Frankenstein of the Nineties". "I was interested in the story, particularly the thought of breeding some thing just for experiments, which is close to what is happening now. I wouldn't put anything past them."

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Working on CHIMERA gave him the opportunity to pursue his tour of Britain seeking out Victorian paintings.

"When we made CHIMERA we were based in Bradford which was perfect for me. I love Victorian paintings and Indian food. I went to see collections in Bradford and Leeds.



"When I am away on location I always add a day to the schedule to visit a collection. I love the mystique and romanticism of Victorian painters, and it is a fantasy of mine to own one of their works. The tragedy is there are a lot of collections which can never be seen because there is nowhere to display them. They should stop building offices and build the occasional art gallery instead."

Ken is married to actress Fiona Victory, who he met on the set of Harvey Moon. They live in North London.

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EMER GILLESPIE PLAYS NURSE TRACY PICKFORD

Emer Gillespie was horrified by what she saw on screen when she watched CHIMERA for the first time.

It was not the gruesome story of a bloody massacre which upset her, but the podgy face staring back at her. And she immediately vowed to lose weight.

"I had never been unhappy with my weight. I enjoyed my food, and I love cooking. But recently a few extra pounds had crept on. When I saw myself in CHIMERA I felt my facial features were dulled by plumpness around my chin and cheekbones," says 27 year old Emer.

"As I see my face as something with which to express emotion and characters I decided I needed to lose some weight."

She embarked on a special American diet and a strict exercise regime—swimming, weight training, aerobic work outs and walking the dog. Within two months she had shed a stone and a half.

"I am not slimming to be glamorous. I just think your face is your canvas, and if it is slightly dulled you have to do something about it."

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Emer in fact objects to the stereotype requirement for actresses to be pencil slim.

Her dieting secret when she is entertaining is to cook dishes with onions in for her guests. She is allergic to onions, and so is never tempted to stray away from her diet.

"I don't have a sweet tooth. But I love red wine and blue cheese. But I am slimmer now than I have ever been since I began acting."

Emer began her acting career when she was still studying drama at Bristol University. In her last year of college she was offered a leading role in a play called Lily, being staged in London. Her tutors said she couldn't take the role. But Emer sneaked away from the campus each day on an early train to London.

But she was found out by one tutor who spotted her face on a poster advertising the play.

On television Emer has appeared in Casualty- as a terrorist, Bergerac, Truckers and Crossfire. She played the lead in the ITV mini series Troubles with Ian Charleson and Ian Richardson. She also appeared in the films Sammie and Rosie Get Laid, and The Cook, The Thief, His Wife and Her Lover.

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STEPHEN GALLAGHER

Author Stephen Gallagher uncovered chilling claims from scientists that a chimera had been produced when he researched the controversial subject of genetic engineering for his prophetic thriller.

His investigations revealed reports from more than 20 years ago predicting the creation of artificial mammals by 1990.

And he fears gentic manipulation could open up a pandora's box of problems.

"I came across claims by practising scientists that they had produced a chimera, but had destroyed it at the embryo stage because of the social, moral and ethical questions involved," says 36 year old Stephen.

"Embryo technology could spark a race among scientists, who have been producing hybrids, in genetic manipulation. It is a pandora's box. There are always people ready to lift the lid on developments like these for sheer greed and ego.

"My main fear is that we would have a slave species with no rights, who would live for nothing but exploitation. It would be social cruelty on a mass scale."

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Stephen admits he finds it scary that the fictitious developments he wrote about in his book are rapidly becoming a terrifying reality.

"The economic pressures for such progress is huge. Chimeras could provide cheap labour and military fodder, and could be harvested for transplant organs. A study in the late sixties predicted sub humans would be available by 2025. That forecasted date is reducing by the day."



The publication in 1982 of CHIMERA, Stephen's first novel, instantly established him as one of Britain's leading writers of contemporary thriller fiction. Stephen adapted the story for television, and says the issues it explores take viewers through a moral minefield.

"The story is full blooded and does not shirk the issues," says Stephen. " We show a creature which does terrible things to his victims, but who is just as much a victim. It is also a quirky love story about people who are lost in an age which exploits the individual.

"People are going to be far more aware of the issues raised in CHIMERA now than when I wrote the book. It is so topical now, especially with the debates about embryo research.

"I am not against embryo research, but I do not agree with the creation of animal/human hybrids. More effort should be put into the creation of artificial organs for transplants, and into discovering the cause of diseases that are making transplants necessary."

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Stephen worked as a documentary researcher with Yorkshire Television and then in transmission control at Granada Television before devoting his time to writing. His first work was a serial for Piccadilly Radio in Manchester called The Last Rose of Summer. He went on to write a Saturday Night Theatre play and episodes of Dr Who for the BBC.



Widely acclaimed as a genre horror writer, Stephen received mainstream recognition with the publication of his book Rain, Three more of his novels are destined for the screen-Valley of Lights, Oktober and Down River. His latest book, The Boat House was published earlier this year, and he is now working on a new novel.

Stephen lives in Lancashire with his wife Marilyn and four year old daughter Ellen.

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IMAGE ANIMATION

Chad, the fantasy, futuristic creature conceived by writer Stephen Gallagher came to life in the studios of Image Animation at Pinewood in Buckinghamshire.



The hybrid that had been a figment of Stephen's vivid imagination took shape in the skilled hands of the company's expert team of make up and special effects technicians.

Company chairman Bob Keen admits it was not an easy task to create Chad. "Stephen Gallagher had a very specific idea of what this half man, half ape should look like. So we had to try to get inside his head to understand how he envisaged Chad," says Bob.

"We did about 30 sketches of the hybrid from which Stephen chose two he liked, and we started work."

The job was complicated because of the animatronics, the mechanics involved in giving Chad realistic expressions instead of just a mask.

"Audiences are so sophisticated these days you cannot afford to cheat when you are creating monsters," says Bob. "Our biggest problem with Chad was making him believable. When you have something that is fantasy you have to be able to stretch people's imaginations a little further."

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Three heads were made for the creature. One for close-ups, one for mid shots, and one for the stunt action. Employing the animatronics the team was able to create a range of expressions. A movement of the eyebrows changes Chad from happy to sad, and moving his mouth brings snarls, sneers and teeth baring.



The movements were achieved by cables operated by four technicians working beside Chad, but out of sight of the cameras. A wide shot demanded the use of remote control. A body cast was made for actor Douggie Mann to wear as he brought Chad to life on set.

It took Image Animation six months to create Chad in their workshop at Pinewood Film Studios near Slough. The meticulous work included securing each hair on his head individually, a job which took two weeks alone, and building huge muscles onto the body.

Image Animation was formed five years ago. The company has been responsible for creating monsters and special effects in such films as Highlander, Life Forces, The Empire Strikes Back, Hell Raiser, Night Breed and Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde.

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PETER ELLIOTT

People call him the ape man and Dr Doolittle for his unique rapport with animals and talent for copying their antics.

And after spending months living with a colony of chimpanzees, he doesn't mind a bit.

"I prefer animals to people. At least you know where you stand with animals. You know if he is running towards you growling it means he doesn't want you around," says Peter candidly.

"I have this rapport with animals because I use the same behavioural approach as they do. I respect animals and I think it is our body language which is weird not theirs. I don't try to imitate animals, I try to become one of them."

Peter , who choreographed Chad in CHIMERA and has played leading apes in Greystoke, Gorillas in the Mist and King Kong, spent nine months living with a colony of chimpanzees in Oklahoma to study their behaviour and develop his expertise at what he calls "chimping".

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Dressed in a gorilla suit, he socially integrated with a family of chimps. But he had several frightening experiences which made him wonder why he had chosen this unusual diversion from what had started as a normal acting career.

"Adult chimps are eight to ten times stronger in the upper body than man, and have the emotional stability of a one year old child," Peter explains.

His first tentative meetings with the chimps were guarded. But then he went alone to the island and spent all day there, even staying overnight and sharing their concrete houses.

"I was treated by the chimps as one of them. But there were plenty of occasions when I thought, what am I doing here? I was mauled three times. Once I had the steel arm extension I was wearing bitten off by an angry chimp. He bit into my arm just four inches below my own hand and tossed me around like a rag doll. I escaped by jumping into a moat, chimps hate water."

Another time Peter's life was saved by the steel pack he was wearing under his costume. "The radio waves controlling my head were interrupted by a radio controlled plane, and my face began distorting peculiarly. The chimp went mad, jumped on my back and began pounding."

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Peter's childhood ambition was to be in films. But when he left school at 16 he became an acrobat, and toured Europe with a display team. He was working as a drunken waiter doing an acrobatic can can routine when he was asked to audition for the film Greystoke. And his love affair with primates began.



He struck up an instant friendship with the first Hollywood chimp he met- Evie. "I felt I had worked with her all my life. Being able to quadroped (walk on all fours) made it easier.

"Evie jumped up a tree and started making a nest. I jumped up after her, and followed as she swung through the trees. But it was most embarrassing when I got stuck up a tree and had to be rescued."

Peter's unique expertise at chimping means he is in big demand from film makers. And he clearly loves his work. "You get all the best action packed work to do. As King Kong I was blown up, and in Gorillas in the Mist I was a mother gorilla clutching her baby up a tree when the tree was chopped down by hunters. It would be strange to go back to doing small walk on parts now."

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Peter coached Duggie Mann in the art of chimping for two months before filming to prepare him for his monster role. And he was present on set to advise on action and behaviour.

"Chad is a monster with a heart. To him he is just a misunderstood guy, who was made into a monster by the people who have dabbled in genetic engineering," says Peter.

But unlike his other roles Chad was a hybrid, and Peter had to devise a form of half man half ape behaviour.

Although he finds primates the most fascinating, Peter has worked with other animals, and dived with death. He was mauled by a panther and stood in front of a stampede of elephants.

Away from the cameras Peter still finds he is asked to chimp out. "I have to watch that people don't just see it as a party trick. I used to refuse to talk about my work. But now I just go along with it," says Peter.

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